

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1 1. A tendering station comprising
2 a movable housing;
3 a removable terminal attached to said housing for acquiring transaction
4 information, said terminal having a display and a device for communicating the information over
5 a wireless communication network, and at least one activation key for activating one or more
6 user functions; and
7 at least one peripheral device attached to said housing and coupled to said
8 terminal for conveying the transaction information and related information to or from a user.

1 2. The tendering station according to claim 1, wherein one or more members
2 are attached to the bottom thereof for facilitating the movement and positioning of said station.

1 3. The tendering station according to claim 1, wherein said housing
2 comprises a top surface for mounting the removable terminal and said at least one peripheral
3 device.

1 4. The tendering station according to claim 3, wherein said top surface
2 further includes an item handling area.

1 5. The tendering station according to claim 1, wherein said housing
2 comprises at least one storage area for storing supplies, cash, coupons, receipts and the like.

1 6. The tendering station according to Claim 1, wherein said housing
2 comprises at least one tag remover for removing tags or labels from an item.

1 7. The tendering station according to Claim 1, wherein said housing is
2 mounted on wheels and includes at least one handle member for maneuvering said tendering
3 station.

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8. The tendering station according to Claim 1, wherein said at least one
peripheral device comprises a display device for displaying transaction and related information.

1 9. The tendering station according to Claim 8, wherein said display device
2 comprises an adjustable support attached to said housing.

1 10. The tendering station according to Claim 1, wherein said at least one
2 peripheral device comprises a printer for printing a receipt or transaction report.

1 11. The tendering station according to Claim 1, wherein said at least one

2 peripheral device comprises a magnetic strip reader for reading customer cards and transmitting
3 card information to said terminal.

1 12. The tendering station according to Claim 1, wherein said at least one
2 peripheral device comprises a keyboard coupled to said terminal for entering data into said
3 terminal.

4 13. The tendering station according to Claim 1, wherein said at least one
5 peripheral device comprises a scanner for reading bar codes and transmitting bar code
6 information to said terminal.

7 14. The tendering station according to Claim 13, wherein said scanner is
8 constructed and arranged with said terminal.

9 15. The tendering station according to Claim 1, wherein said at least one
10 peripheral device comprises a telephone headset having a transceiver for receiving and
11 transmitting audio information to and from said terminal for retransmission from said terminal to
12 over said wireless communications network.

1 16. The tendering station according to Claim 1, further comprising a power

2 source for powering said at least one peripheral device.

1 17. The tendering station according to Claim 1, further comprising one or
2 more infrared communication links between said terminal and said at least one peripheral device.

1 18. The tendering station according to Claim 1, wherein said terminal
2 comprises a magnetic strip reader attached thereto for reading a customer card and transmitting
3 card information to said terminal.

1 19. The tendering station according to Claim 1, wherein said terminal
2 comprises an Internet browser.

20. A portable customer service station for facilitating a customer transaction
in a shopping facility, said customer service station comprising:

5 21. a movable housing;

4 a removable handheld terminal attached said housing for acquiring transaction
5 information, said terminal having a display, a wireless radio for communicating the information
6 over a wireless communication network, at least one activation key for activating one or more
7 user functions, and a scanner for reading bar code information;

8 a customer display attached to said housing and coupled to said terminal for

Docket 856

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displaying the transaction information and related information to a customer; and
a printer device for printing receipts or transaction reports.

1 21. The customer service station according to Claim 20, further comprising a
2 magnetic strip reader attached to said housing and coupled to said terminal for reading customer
3 cards and transmitting card information to said terminal.

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22. The customer service station according to Claim 20, further comprising a
telephone headset having a transceiver for receiving and transmitting audio information to and
from said terminal for retransmission from said terminal over said wireless communications
network.

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23. The customer service station according to Claim 20, further comprising a
power source for powering said at least one peripheral device.

1 24. The customer service station according to Claim 20, further comprising
2 one or more infrared communication links between said terminal and said at least one peripheral
3 device.

1 25. The customer service station according to Claim 20, wherein said movable

Docket 856

housing comprises:

an item handling area disposed on the top surface of said housing;
at least one storage area for storing supplies, cash, coupons, receipts and the like;
at least one tag remover for removing tags or labels from an item;
wheels member attached to the bottom thereof for facilitating the movement and
positioning of said customer service station within the shopping facility; and
at least one handle member for maneuvering said tendering station within the
shopping facility.

26. The customer service station according to Claim 20, wherein said terminal
comprises computer memory, said computer memory being programmed with a computer
program for assisting a customer by identifying customer preferences and inventory availability.

27. The customer service station according to Claim 20, wherein said terminal
comprises computer memory, said computer memory being programmed with a computer
program for providing power management of said customer service station.

1 28. The customer service station according to Claim 20, wherein said terminal
2 comprises computer memory, said computer memory being programmed with a computer
3 program for sending and receiving messages to and from a host computer via the wireless
4 network.

1 29. The customer service station according to Claim 20, wherein said terminal
2 comprises a magnetic strip reader adapter attached thereto for reading a customer card and
3 transmitting card information to said terminal.

1 30. The customer service station according to Claim 20, wherein said terminal
2 comprises an Internet browser.

31. A portable tendering station for facilitating a customer transaction in
shopping facility, said tendering station comprising:
3 a movable housing;
4 a cradle interface attached to said housing;
5 a removable handheld terminal connected to said cradle interface for acquiring
6 transaction information, said terminal having a display, a wireless radio for communicating the
7 information over a wireless communication network, at least one activation key for activating
8 one or more user functions, and a scanner for reading bar code information; and

1 at least one peripheral device attached to said station and in communication with
2 said terminal via said cradle interface for conveying the transaction information and related
3 information to or from a customer, said at least one peripheral device being used to complete said
4 transaction.

1 32. The tendering station according to Claim 31, wherein said at least one
2 peripheral comprises a display device for displaying the transaction and related information.

1 33. The tendering station according to Claim 31, wherein said at least one
2 peripheral comprises a printer for printing a receipt or transaction report.

1 34. The tendering station according to Claim 31, wherein said at least one
2 peripheral comprises a magnetic strip reader for reading customer cards and transmitting card
3 information to said terminal.

1 35. The tendering station according to Claim 31, wherein said at least one
2 peripheral comprises a display device for displaying the transaction and related information.

1 36. The tendering station according to Claim 31, wherein said at least one
2 peripheral comprises a keyboard coupled to said terminal for entering data into said terminal.

1 37. The tendering station according to Claim 31, wherein said at least one
2 peripheral comprises a telephone headset having a transceiver for receiving and transmitting
3 audio information to and from said terminal for retransmission from said terminal over said
4 wireless network.

1 38. The tendering station according to Claim 31, wherein said housing
2 comprises at least one drawer for securely storing monies and credit receipts for items tendered at
3 said tendering station.

1 39. The tendering station according to Claim 31, wherein said housing
2 comprises at least one storage area.

1 40. The tendering station according to Claim 31, wherein said housing
2 comprises at least one tag remover for removing tags or labels from items tendered at said
3 tendering station.

1 41. The tendering station according to Claim 31, wherein said housing
2 comprises one or more members attached to the bottom thereof for facilitating the movement and
3 positioning of said tendering station within the shopping facility.

1 42. The tendering station according to Claim 31, wherein said housing is
2 mounted on wheels and includes at least one handle member for maneuvering said tendering
3 station within the shopping facility.

1 43. The tendering station according to Claim 31, further comprising a power
2 source for powering said at least one peripheral device.

1 44. The tendering station according to Claim 31, further comprising one or
2 more infrared communication links between said terminal and said at least one peripheral device.

1 45. The tendering station according to Claim 31, wherein said terminal
2 comprises computer memory, said computer memory being programmed with a computer
3 program for assisting a customer by identifying customer preferences and inventory availability.

1 46. The tendering station according to Claim 31, wherein said terminal
2 comprises computer memory, said computer memory being programmed with a computer
3 program for providing power management of said customer service station.

1 47. The tendering station according to Claim 31, wherein said terminal

1 comprises computer memory, said computer memory being programmed with a computer
2 program for sending and receiving messages to and from a host computer via the wireless
3 network.

1 48. The tendering station according to Claim 31, wherein said terminal
2 comprises a magnetic strip reader adapter attached thereto for reading a customer card and
3 transmitting card information to said terminal.

1 49. The tendering station according to Claim 31, wherein said terminal
2 comprises an Internet browser.

1 50. A customer service station for facilitating a customer transaction in a
2 shopping facility, said customer service station comprising:
3 a housing;
4 an interface attached to said housing for receiving and transmitting transaction
5 and related information over a wireless communication network; and
6 at least one peripheral device attached to said customer service station and
7 coupled to said interface for conveying the transaction and related information to or from a
8 customer, said at least one peripheral device being used to complete said customer transaction.

1 51. The customer service station according to Claim 50, wherein said at least
2 one peripheral comprises a receipt printer for printing the transaction and related information.

1 52. The customer service station according to Claim 50, wherein said at least
2 one peripheral comprises a journal printer for printing a transaction report.

1 53. The customer service station according to Claim 50, wherein said at least
2 one peripheral comprises a magnetic strip reader for reading customer cards and transmitting
3 card information to said terminal.

1 54. The customer service station according to Claim 50, wherein said at least
2 one peripheral comprises a display device for displaying the transaction and related information.

1 55. The customer service station according to Claim 50, wherein said housing
2 comprises an item handling area disposed on the top surface of said housing.

1 56. The customer service station according to Claim 50, wherein said housing
2 is movable and comprises:

3 an item handling area disposed on the top surface of said housing; and
4 wheels attached to the bottom thereof for facilitating the movement and

1 positioning of said customer service station ~~within~~ the shopping facility.

1 57. A system for providing tendering and customer services, comprising:
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3 a host computer for processing transaction data;
4 a controller coupled to said host computer for communicating the transaction
5 information to and from said host computer;
6 a wireless communication network coupled to said controller for communicating
7 the transaction information to and from said controller; and
8 a portable station in communication with said network for providing the
9 transaction information to said network, said station comprising:
10 a movable housing;
11 a removable terminal attached to said housing for acquiring the transaction
12 information, said terminal having a display and a device for communicating the information over
13 said wireless network, and at least one activation key for activating one or more user functions;
14 and
15 at least one peripheral device attached to said housing and coupled to said
terminal for conveying the transaction information and related information to or from a user.

1 58. A handheld terminal for acquiring transaction information, comprising:
2 a housing;

3 a display disposed on the top surface of said housing;
4 at least one activation key for activating one or more user functions;
5 a magnetic strip reader attached to said housing for reading magnetically coded
6 information from a customer card, the magnetically coded information representing at least in
7 part the transaction information; and
8 a device for communicating the transaction information over a wireless
9 communication network.

59. The terminal according to Claim 60, further comprising a scanner for
scanning bar code information representing at least in part the transaction information.

60. The terminal according to Claim 60, further comprising an Internet
browser.

1 61. A method for controlling the number of customer service stations in a
2 shopping facility so as to manage fluctuations in customer traffic, said method comprising:
3 providing a portable checkout station at a retail facility, the station having a
4 movable housing, a removable terminal attached to the housing for acquiring customer
5 transaction information, the terminal having a display and a device for communicating the
6 information over a wireless communication network and at least one activation key for activating

7 one or more user functions, and at least one peripheral device attached to said housing and
8 coupled to said terminal for conveying the transaction information and related information to or
9 from a customer;

10 positioning the portable checkout station at an appropriate location within the
11 facility so as to minimize customer traffic within the facility;

12 running a register application on the terminal wherein the terminal functions to
13 collect the transaction information pertaining to a customer's purchase and transmitting such
14 transaction information to a host computer;

15 using the portable terminal to collect information pertaining to items selected by a
16 customer to be purchased;

17 generating a transaction report;

18 receiving payment;

19 placing items in a receptacle for delivery to the customer.

1 62. The method according to Claim 61, further comprising using the at least
2 one peripheral device to collect information pertaining to items selected by the customer to be
3 purchased.

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3 63. In a system wherein a host processor communicates with a plurality of
mobile terminals using radio data communication, a method for controlling functions available to
terminal users, comprising:

4 issuing a terminal to a user;
5 receiving identification data specific to said user on said terminal and
6 communicating said identification data to said host processor;
7 operating said host processor to determine functions to be made available to said
user, using said identification data;
8 communicating a message to said terminal identifying available functions; and
9 operating said host processor to provide user selected ones of said available
10 functions to said user.
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